

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the researcher explains six points related to the background of the research, statement of the research problems, objectives of the research, significance of the research, the scope and limitation of the research, and definition of the key terms.

### **A. Background of the Research**

In this era, we can learn new things through the internet, books, movies, and also literature. Literature is one of the works that we commonly find and read. Literature itself is made based on artistic values. According to Hudson (1963: 10), literature is a vital record of what men have seen in life, what they have experienced, and what they have thought and felt about those aspects. It means literature made by ideas, expressions, imaginations, experiences, social phenomena, and histories. Literature is a work to express life through language as the media and has artistic values.

Literary works are divided into three subjects; drama, poetry, and prose. The prose itself is divided into two; nonfiction prose and fiction prose. Nonfiction prose refers to literature that is made based on fact. The kinds of nonfiction prose are articles, autobiographies, biography, essays, newspapers, religion books, self-improvement books, textbooks, etc. Meanwhile, fiction prose refers to literature created from the ideas, imaginations, emotions,

expressions, social phenomena, and the author's experiences. The kinds of fiction works are drama or plays, prose, poems, and novels.

A novel is a form of literary work that has intrinsic and extrinsic elements created from the author's imagination or based on the author's experiences. Abrams (2013: 252) stated that novel is the term that applied to a great variety of writings that extended works of fiction written in prose. The novel has several values related to our life, such as cultural, social, religion, moral, and education. According to Collie and Slater in Sundari (2015: 2) state that one of the aims of learning literature is a reader can discover their thoughts, feelings, customs, possessions; what they buy, believe in, and enjoy; how they speak and behave closed door. Besides, Sundari (2015: 1) stated that literary work may open the eyes of the readers to know the reality of the social, cultural, political, moral, aesthetic, and education frame.

Education is not limited to school or classroom only, but it is a lifelong process for a human to get knowledge, experiences, skills, insights, and values. Etymologically, education is derived from the *Latin* word '*Educare*' with the meaning 'to raise' and 'to bring up.' Durkheim in Arslan *et al.* (2018: 1) defines education as the influence exercised by adult generations on those who are not yet ready for social life. It means that the purpose of education is to help children improve their intellectual ability and physical capability.

In the form of education, especially in learning English, reading is one of the skills that must be learned by students. Reading is an essential skill for learners of English as a foreign language (Ismail, Syahrufa, & Basuki, 2017).

One of the learning media that can be used to improve reading skills is novels. As stated by Rachmijati & Anggraeni (2019: 54) novel can be one additional material in a learning activity. By reading English novels, students can get several benefits. In terms of language, a novel can help students to develop new vocabulary (Rachmijati & Anggraeni, 2019). While in terms of English, a novel can help students learn the structure of sentences and apply them in social media (Rachmijati & Anggraeni, 2019).

Furthermore, by reading a novel, the readers can feel the situation that occurred, know the plot of the story, setting, character and characterization, point of view, theme, and moral values. The novel's readers are usually interested in the story which has a topic related to their experiences or their conditions. The readers are also interested in the conflict faced by the character, especially the main character. The main character is the central character who is involved in a story. This character is most told, both as the perpetrator and the subject of the incident. The main characters are classified into major characters, which are divided into two types, namely protagonist and antagonist. The protagonist is the main character of the story, while the antagonist is the person who opposes the main character.

In this research, the researcher chose the *Little Women* novel to be analyzed because this novel was written based on Louisa May Alcott's true story which was published twice in 1868 and 1869 with American Civil War as the background. This novel tells about four sisters, namely Meg, Jo, Beth, and Amy. This novel not only tells about family, love, struggles, and dreams

but also about gender stereotypes of socio-cultural and social class in the environment and society faced by young women. This novel contains many lessons related to gender equality in social life, especially to gain knowledge, education, reach dreams, and find a job.

*Little Women* novel was sold well in Great Britain and during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, this novel was translated into many languages, including; French, Dutch, German, Swedish, Danish, Greek, Japanese, and Russian (George, Smithsonianmag: 2018). Moreover, this novel has spawned four movies, and more than 10 television adaptations. In 1912 *Little Women* novel premiered as a Broadway drama while the Broadway musical in 2005, an opera, a museum, a series of dolls, and countless stories and books. Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) also broadcast the two-night, three-hour *Little Women* movies produced by the BBC. Otherwise, in 1933, 1949, 1994, 1998, and 2001 this novel was adapted into a movie broadcast by PBS. While in 1994 *Little Women* movie also won three prestigious awards at once. This novel was adapted again into a movie in 2019 with Greta Gerwig as the director.

Shortly, *Little Women* novel tells about four sisters, namely Margaret March (Meg) who has a beautiful face, Josephine March (Jo) the boyish girl who likes reading and writing and wants to be a famous writer, Elizabeth March (Beth) who has a shy manner and like to play piano, and Amy March (Amy) who like art. They live with their mother (Marmee) and the servant (Hannah) in Concord, Massachusetts during the American Civil War era. They

also have a father who works as a soldier and joins in a war for a long time. Meg and her sisters struggle to survive despite their different personalities.

In that era, women had to obey the rules made by men. In their culture, young women have two options. The first option is they should always be seen as beautiful, elegant, and gentle, and also have to often attend parties to find a rich man and marry him so that their lives will be guaranteed. While the second option is the girls are allowed to spend life without getting married because they have been rich since childhood. However, these four sisters have different mindsets, and the most prominent is depicted in the second daughter, named Josephine March.

Josephine March or the boyish girl is the second daughter of the March family. She likes reading books and writing stories. She can be said to be a young feminist of her time because she has a different mindset from the other girls. Josephine March chose her way of living to achieve her dreams, that is become a famous writer rather than being a housewife as the culture of her time. She thinks that women also have the strength to stand on their path without depending on men, including getting the same rights in social life because women in her era were forbidden to go to school, find a job, earn money, etc. She feels that women have always been victims of discrimination and racism.

From the reason above, the researcher can gain new knowledge, especially about feminism which is portrayed in the main character, Josephine March, or the boyish girl. Feminism itself is a movement that is committed by

women to reject everything marginalized both in political, economic, education, and other social life. Feminism is a belief that men and women should have equal opportunities because men and women have the same rights to choose, deliver an opinion, get an education, find a job that is suitable for them, and reach their dreams.

The feminist movement was divided into three waves. The first wave (1792-1920) is marked by Mary Wollstonecraft's book that is *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* in 1792. Besides, in 1848 was held the first Women Rights Convention which was held in Seneca Falls. Then, the second wave (1960-1988) was marked by the publication of *Betty Friedan's book Feminine Mystique* in 1963. Madsen (2000) stated that this wave focused on an indictment of male sexism and the domestic oppression of women. The third wave began in the 1990s and was characterized by the willingness to accommodate diversity and change. One of the types of feminism in the first wave is liberal feminism. Liberal feminism is a feminist movement that focused on individual freedom for women in political, economic, education, and social spheres. It can also call as the first feminist movement.

There are several studies that are concerned with liberal feminism. The first is a thesis by Aenun Nahdiyati (2009) entitled "*An Analysis of Liberal Feminism Values of the Main Character in Film "Miss Potter"*". She talks about the characterization and liberal feminism values in Beatrix Potter. She found four characterizations of Beatrix Potter; progressive, critical person, independent, and decisive. While she found four liberal feminism values in

Beatrix Potter; taking part in the public sphere, gentle and classy, rational, and commits to marry with man.

The second is a thesis by Laudita Kanana Rizki Nareswari (2019) entitled “*Liberal Feminism Seen Through the Main Female Character in Educating Rita Movie*”. The research aims to explain the characteristics of Rita as the main character and reveal how Rita’s characteristics can portray liberal feminism. The researcher found five characteristics of Rita. Those are; determined, rebellious, smart, hard-working, and independent. In addition, the researcher found that Rita’s characteristics portray liberal feminism. Rita’s characteristics are portrayed as liberal feminism because she wants to get equality in education. From her five characteristics, she can get what she wants, that is get higher education and be an educated woman.

The third is a thesis by Khaerul Annas’s (2017) entitled “*Liberal Feminism of Female Characters as Seen in Frozen Movie*”. In this research, the researcher found three-part of liberal feminism; women as androgynous people, women as the autonomous, and women as intelligent creatures.

From the explanation above, the three previous studies and this study also use literary works of different types. Ainun Nahdiyati’s thesis uses the literary work of *Miss Potter Movie* while Laudita Kanana Rizki Nareswari uses *Educating Rita Movie* and Khaerul Annas’s thesis uses *Frozen Movie*. Meanwhile, in this study, the researcher uses *Little Women Novel* by Louisa May Alcott as the research object. The similarity between this study and the three previous studies is to analyze the liberal feminism of the main character.

This study, entitled “*Liberal Feminism Portrayed in the Main Character in the Little Women Novel and the Implication in Education*” focused on the liberal feminism portrayed in the main character and its implication in education. This novel is interesting to be analyzed because there are several values that can improve our knowledge about liberal feminism portrayed by Josephine March, her struggle to reach her dreams, and also its implication in education. Josephine March is a character that inspiring because she never gives up to reach her dreams, speaks for women’s rights, and also speaks against discrimination toward women. It also has educational values that are related to our social life.

## **B. Statement of Research Problems**

Based on the background of the research above, the main purpose of this study is to find out the liberal feminism portrayed in the main character in the *Little Women* novel and its implication in education. The research problems in this research are presented below:

1. What are the values of liberal feminism experienced by the main character in the *Little Women* novel?
2. What are the reasons of the main character experienced liberal feminism in the *Little Women* novel?
3. What is the implication of liberal feminism in the main character in the *Little Women* novel in education?



### **C. Objective of the Research**

Based on the problems of the research, the objectives of the research are presented below:

1. To find the values of liberal feminism experienced by the main character in the *Little Women* novel?
2. To explain the reasons of the main character experienced liberal feminism in the *Little Women* novel.
3. To reveal the implication of liberal feminism in the main character in the *Little Women* novel in education.

### **D. Significance of the Research**

This research is expected to give contribution toward the improvement of knowledge, especially in analyzing novel both theoretically and practically.

#### **1. Theoretical Significance**

This research is expected can help to provide the readers to know and understand liberal feminism in the *Little Women* novel written by Louisa May Alcott. In addition, this research can also increase knowledge in the field of literature and the guidelines of reference for the next researchers who will establish similar research.

#### **2. Practical Significance**

The result of this research is expected can give a contribution to the English teaching and learning process, especially for:

- a. For students: this research can help students to learn about novel, main character, liberal feminism, and its implication in education. Besides, it

is expected that by reading novels students can improve their reading skills and enrich their vocabulary.

- b. For teachers: this research can be used as a reference in the teaching-learning process, especially in novels, main character, liberal feminism, and its implication in education.
- c. For other researchers: this research is expected to provide a better understanding of literary analysis, especially for those who research novels, main character, liberal feminism, and its implication in education.

#### **E. Scope and Limitation of the Research**

The scope of this research is studying a novel entitled *Little Women*. Meanwhile, the limitation of the study is the liberal feminism experienced by the main character in the *Little Women* novel and its implication in education.

#### **F. Definition of the Key Terms**

To avoid misunderstanding of some words, the writer would like to provide some explanations or definitions as follows:

##### **1. Main Character**

The main character is the central character who is involved in a story. This character is most told, both as the perpetrator and the subject of the incident.

##### **2. Liberal Feminism**

In this context, liberal feminism is the theory used by the researcher to analyze liberal feminism values portrayed in the main

character. Liberal feminism is a feminist movement that focuses on individual freedom for women in education, political, economic, and social spheres.